

Natural and Environmental Resources

Vilas County's natural resources are its greatest assets, and are critical to the area's economic viability. Vilas County has a total area of 651,098 acres. Of this total, about 554,777 acres is land and 96,321 acres (14.8%) is water. Vilas County features 1,327 lakes, one of the highest concentrations of inland freshwater lakes in the world. Wetlands, a minimum of 5 acres in size, cover about 114,126 acres, or about 17.5% of the county.

Roughly 70% of the county is forested land. There are 24,534 acres of private lands enrolled in the Forest Crop Program, 1,613 acres in Woodland Tax and 12,511 acres in Managed Forest Law Programs.

Vilas County has some of the highest elevations in the state, ranging from about 1,560 feet above sea level in the southwest corner of the county to 1,845 feet at Muskellunge Hill near Sayner.

Climate

The average total annual precipitation is about 34 inches. Of this, about 25 inches (70%) usually falls in April through September. The average seasonal snowfall is about 85 inches. On the average, 87 days of the year have at least one inch of snow on the ground. However, the number of such days varies greatly from year to year. The yearly temperature and rainfall greatly affects this tourism industry as tourists generally want the best weather available for their vacations. A winter with too little snow fall or bitter cold, a summer with too much rain or too cool/too hot for outdoor activities - these weather conditions can either positively or adversely affect the season in which they occur as well as future seasons (vacationers with a bad experience tend not to return).

Table 19-1 Wisconsin Monthly Temperature and Precipitation, 2001													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual+
North Central Region*													
Temperature (°F)	17.5	11.2	25.3	43.4	54.7	62.6	66.8	67.3	55.1	43.2	40.8	25.0	42.7
Normal Temperature (°F)	9.7	14.1	26.3	40.7	53.0	61.7	66.9	64.1	55.3	44.7	30.4	15.3	40.2
Precipitation (in inches)	1.20	1.54	0.76	5.33	4.27	4.01	3.35	3.47	3.62	2.93	2.64	1.38	34.50
Normal Participation (in inches)	1.11	0.90	1.77	2.44	3.45	3.90	3.74	4.25	4.21	2.64	2.04	1.46	31.91
State													
Temperature (°F)	19.5	15.0	28.1	46.6	56.7	64.3	69.9	69.8	57.2	46.0	43.5	27.7	45.4
Normal Temperature (°F)	12.4	17.2	29.4	43.4	55.2	64.3	69.4	66.8	58.1	47.2	33.0	18.3	42.9
Precipitation (in inches)	1.21	1.69	0.67	4.93	4.86	4.84	2.67	4.59	4.05	2.44	2.28	1.19	35.42
Normal Precipitation (in inches)	1.08	0.95	1.95	2.71	3.38	3.82	3.74	4.04	4.00	2.52	2.01	1.48	31.68

Normal temperatures and normal precipitation are the averages for the period 1961-1990, based on data computed by the U.S. Department of Commerce National Climatic Data Center.

*North Central includes Ashland, Clark, Iron, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Price, Taylor and Vilas Counties

+Annual temperature reflects the average of the monthly figures; annual precipitation is the total for the year.

SOURCE: Wisconsin Blue Book, 2003-04

Table 19-2
Monthly and Annual Precipitation (in inches)
(Rhineland Station)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual	
													Total	Change from Normal*
1982	1.40	.23	1.03	4.09	3.15	2.13	5.57	2.86	6.10	3.45	2.44	3.32	35.77	3.83
1983	1.49	.81	1.57	1.39	4.36	3.86	1.95	3.12	4.72	3.81	3.81	1.13	32.02	.13
1984	.51	1.39	1.26	3.59	---	---	2.55	---	4.32	4.65	.38	2.33	---	---
1985	.14	.88	2.21	1.57	4.85	2.39	4.66	4.80	6.42	4.31	3.70	1.05	36.98	5.09
1986	---	.44	.86	2.28	.56	3.01	8.88	2.79	7.73	3.03	.87	---	---	---
1987	.79	.10	.63	1.02	2.81	1.70	3.82	---	2.59	1.79	2.45	3.46	---	---
1988	---	.24	1.50	---	1.19	2.32	---	4.11	3.78	1.83	1.30	1.01	---	---
1989	---	.41	1.41	.79	---	---	.63	4.25	.57	---	.46	.61	---	---
1990	0.37	0.32	---	3.10	4.97	7.06	4.69	7.91	6.43	3.72	1.35	0.77	---	---
1991	0.70	0.97	3.04	4.33	7.50	4.27	4.99	2.32	3.46	3.03	4.87	1.16	40.64	8.75
1992	0.70	1.39	1.76	2.87	2.66	2.52	2.23	3.17	6.71	2.17	3.49	1.80	31.47	-0.42
1993	1.45	0.04	0.43	2.60	4.53	5.81	2.77	3.42	3.62	2.17	1.76	0.59	29.19	-2.72
1994	0.90	0.94	0.75	2.91	1.71	4.40	3.94	4.76	8.51	1.77	1.49	0.35	32.43	0.52
1995	0.39	0.51	1.41	1.94	4.07	0.85	5.40	5.74	2.58	5.4	2.03	1.35	31.71	-0.15
1996	2.53	0.56	2.16	2.16	0.97	4.42	5.43	3.45	2.60	4.23	2.57	2.17	31.71	-0.78
1997	3.15	0.11	1.78	1.04	2.53	6.31	4.58	3.79	4.23	3.91	0.73	0.59	32.75	0.84
1998	1.84	1.06	3.24	1.16	4.43	5.25	1.04	1.82	1.87	1.57	2.09	0.84	26.21	-5.70
1999	2.30	1.46	0.46	1.87	7.25	2.99	7.88	2.79	1.78	1.94	1.55	0.76	33.03	1.12
2000	1.57	1.86	2.30	2.51	2.46	5.00	10.24	3.24	4.10	0.73	2.19	1.15	37.35	5.44
2001	.89	1.14	0.69	4.69	4.49	4.01	4.65	2.13	6.38	2.73	2.79	1.93	36.52	4.61
2002	0.61	1.88	2.42	6.33	2.86	4.18	5.69	3.66	6.54	3.94	0.43	0.65	39.19	6.75

*Normal 1971-2000. Source: State Climatology Office

SOURCE: 1990 Vilas County Economic Indicator Report; Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics, 1991-2003..

Table 19-3
Monthly and Annual Precipitation (in inches)
(District)*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual	
													Total	Change from Normal**
Normal	1.08	.90	1.72	2.48	3.64	4.16	4.04	4.56	3.80	2.30	1.89	1.32	31.89	—
1982	1.86	.30	1.59	4.05	4.23	2.76	6.39	3.19	5.56	4.45	2.74	2.84	39.96	8.07
1983	1.48	.84	1.54	1.71	4.38	2.05	3.70	4.99	5.49	3.52	4.07	1.29	35.06	3.17
1984	.54	1.37	1.26	3.17	2.12	4.47	3.13	3.78	4.81	3.71	1.27	2.57	32.20	.31
1985	.48	1.12	2.43	2.79	4.11	3.99	3.06	5.20	7.10	3.42	3.86	1.49	39.05	7.16
1986	.72	.89	1.70	2.68	.88	4.57	6.37	4.18	7.48	3.23	1.26	.51	34.47	2.58
1987	.73	.11	.88	1.12	2.93	2.26	5.29	2.49	2.36	3.07	2.81	1.90	25.95	-5.94
1988	1.05	.32	1.89	1.18	1.65	1.91	2.90	4.96	3.45	1.89	3.54	1.39	26.13	-5.76
1989	.92	.54	1.66	1.44	3.92	3.41	1.81	3.89	1.50	2.00	1.54	.79	23.42	-8.47
1990	0.70	0.70	2.46	2.80	3.86	5.68	3.40	5.53	5.85	3.82	1.07	0.92	36.76	4.90
1991	0.63	0.90	3.07	3.76	5.09	4.54	5.57	2.17	4.98	2.88	6.17	1.16	40.92	9.03
1992	0.79	0.88	1.74	2.51	2.98	2.61	3.64	3.05	4.98	2.04	3.01	1.78	30.01	-1.88
1993	1.46	0.13	0.57	3.15	4.91	6.43	2.92	3.29	3.68	2.24	1.96	0.70	31.44	-0.47
1994	1.05	0.57	0.90	3.28	2.00	3.29	4.36	3.45	6.57	2.38	1.95	0.33	30.13	-1.78
1995	0.56	0.58	1.63	2.11	3.66	1.98	3.91	7.85	2.74	5.61	1.78	1.32	33.73	1.87
1996	2.91	0.95	2.05	2.64	1.75	5.37	5.41	2.97	2.90	4.11	2.97	2.34	36.37	3.88
1997	2.73	0.35	2.09	0.66	3.06	3.72	4.61	4.36	3.34	3.18	0.90	0.69	29.69	-2.22
1998	1.77	1.05	2.80	1.37	2.87	5.51	1.27	2.84	2.39	2.24	1.76	1.10	26.97	-4.94
1999	2.33	1.72	0.37	2.26	6.36	3.46	8.17	3.21	2.15	1.47	1.45	0.72	33.67	1.76
2000	1.34	1.57	1.67	2.17	2.63	6.34	5.10	3.76	4.09	0.97	2.26	1.01	32.91	1.00
2001	1.20	1.54	0.76	5.33	4.27	4.01	3.35	3.47	3.62	2.93	2.64	1.38	34.50	2.59
2002	0.54	2.10	3.02	4.78	3.12	4.95	4.90	4.59	5.97	4.96	0.48	0.33	39.74	7.30

*North Central District (Medford, Rhinelander & Wausau Stations)

**Normal 1971-2000. Source: State Climatology Office.

SOURCE: 1990 Vilas County Economic Indicator Report; Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics, 1991-2003.

Table 19-4
Average Monthly and Annual Temperature (in degrees F)
(Rhineland Station)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual	
													Total	Change from Normal*
1982	1.5	12.5	24.4	36.6	58.9	57.3	68.9	62.2	55.1	46.5	29.4	22.6	39.7	-1.5
1983	16.5	24.5	29.5	37.8	48.3	63.1	71.4	69.4	57.9	44.2	30.8	3.2	41.4	.7
1984	6.9	24.2	20.1	44.1	---	---	67.0	---	53.4	48.2	28.6	15.6	---	---
1985	7.4	11.6	30.5	45.0	56.6	59.9	65.4	63.0	54.0	43.4	22.9	4.0	38.6	-2.1
1986	---	12.0	28.4	46.3	57.3	60.6	67.9	61.8	54.7	42.9	25.1	---	---	---
1987	16.6	22.8	32.8	47.8	56.9	66.0	70.1	---	57.7	38.5	33.2	22.8	---	---
1988	---	9.4	28.1	---	58.3	66.0	---	68.8	57.5	39.5	31.9	16.6	---	---
1989	---	7.6	21.3	39.0	---	---	69.4	66.4	56.7	---	25.7	5.4	---	---
1990	21.8	17.1	---	45.1	51.1	62.3	65.8	64.8	58.3	43.5	34.9	16.3	---	---
1991	9.0	20.1	29.1	45.1	58.6	67.2	66.4	67.3	54.9	43.0	25.6	18.8	42.1	0.7
1992	16.8	21.1	26.1	37.9	55.6	59.5	61.7	62.0	55.4	43.7	27.5	18.8	40.5	0.2
1993	13.6	14.3	27.5	37.7	53.1	60.3	66.3	66.7	51.5	42.2	26.8	20.1	40.0	0.6
1994	1.4	10.7	30.0	40.7	54.9	65.2	65.4	63.0	59.7	48.5	34.6	24.0	41.5	1.3
1995	15.9	15.0	30.6	35.6	53.1	68.0	68.5	69.5	55.2	45.5	20.9	13.3	40.9	0.7
1996	6.3	12.8	19.9	34.9	51.0	63.1	63.2	66.4	56.7	44.3	25.3	17.1	38.4	-1.8
1997	10.2	17.7	25.0	39.0	48.0	65.0	66.2	63.0	58.4	46.5	28.4	25.1	41.1	0.9
1998	18.3	30.0	28.7	47.1	60.7	62.4	68.6	69.0	63.3	48.4	35.6	23.6	46.3	6.1
1999	11.0	23.0	30.3	45.8	57.0	64.7	72.0	65.7	57.6	44.9	38.8	20.6	44.3	4.1
2000	12.4	23.0	37.2	41.1	56.4	61.3	66.6	66.6	57.4	49.7	31.3	8.4	42.6	2.4
2001	19.5	13.5	27.4	44.4	56.7	64.0	68.0	69.4	57.7	45.1	42.0	26.3	44.5	4.3
2002	23.0	25.1	21.3	39.8	49.8	65.4	72.3	66.7	60.1	39.7	29.1	22.3	42.9	2.5

*Normal 1971-2000. Source: State Climatology Office.

SOURCE: 1990 Vilas County Economic Indicator Report; Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics, 1991-2003.

Table 19-5
Average Monthly and Annual Temperature (in degrees F)
(District)*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual	
													Total	Change from Normal**
Normal	9.9	14.3	25.3	41.1	53.5	62.3	67.0	64.8	56.0	46.2	30.7	16.9	40.7	—
1982	1.6	12.3	24.6	36.5	58.0	56.3	67.9	62.6	54.9	46.5	29.7	23.1	39.5	-1.7
1983	16.7	24.2	29.8	37.7	48.2	62.7	71.3	69.3	58.1	45.5	32.4	5.4	41.8	1.1
1984	8.9	25.2	20.6	43.5	50.1	63.9	65.36	67.6	53.9	48.4	30.7	17.3	41.3	.6
1985	9.0	12.4	31.6	45.1	56.8	59.2	65.1	62.6	55.9	44.7	24.7	5.6	39.4	-1.3
1986	13.2	13.4	28.9	16.2	56.4	61.5	68.0	61.4	55.8	44.4	26.2	20.4	41.3	.7
1987	17.8	24.7	33.1	16.7	56.5	65.5	69.1	64.5	57.5	39.3	34.2	23.5	44.4	3.7
1988	8.0	9.3	26.9	41.9	58.3	65.9	70.4	68.4	56.9	39.2	32.0	16.1	41.1	.4
1989	17.7	6.3	21.1	38.6	52.6	60.1	68.2	65.3	56.0	46.1	25.2	5.3	38.5	-2.1
1990	20.9	16.3	30.4	43.8	50.2	62.5	65.4	64.7	57.5	42.9	34.4	15.6	42.1	1.4
1991	8.3	18.7	28.4	44.5	58.2	66.5	66.0	66.8	54.1	42.8	24.8	18.0	41.4	0.8
1992	17.1	21.7	26.2	38.1	55.0	59.3	60.6	61.1	54.6	43.4	28.5	18.6	40.3	-0.3
1993	12.6	14.4	26.7	37.0	51.8	58.7	65.7	66.1	50.3	42.7	27.4	19.3	39.4	-0.8
1994	1.0	9.6	28.7	39.7	52.9	63.9	64.4	61.7	58.7	47.0	33.7	22.8	40.3	0.1
1995	14.9	14.3	29.4	34.7	51.2	66.5	67.1	68.7	53.9	45.0	21.8	13.4	40.1	-0.1
1996	6.9	12.3	19.0	34.6	49.2	62.3	63.0	65.1	56.3	44.5	24.5	16.0	37.8	-2.4
1997	9.5	17.5	25.9	39.3	47.3	64.4	65.2	61.2	57.2	45.5	26.9	24.0	40.3	0.1
1998	18.0	29.2	28.5	45.1	58.4	60.8	66.6	66.5	60.7	48.3	34.0	21.1	44.8	4.6
1999	9.3	22.9	28.4	44.3	56.2	63.3	70.0	63.6	55.5	43.9	37.6	19.7	42.9	2.7
2000	11.4	21.7	35.3	39.9	54.7	59.9	65.4	65.0	55.8	48.4	29.7	6.6	41.2	1.0
2001	17.5	11.2	25.3	43.4	54.7	62.6	66.8	67.3	55.1	43.2	40.8	25.0	42.7	2.6
2002	21.2	23.6	20.2	39.0	47.6	63.8	70.6	64.8	58.6	38.4	28.7	22.3	41.6	1.2

*North Central District (Medford, Rhinelander & Wausau Stations)

**Normal 1971-2000. Source: State Climatology Office.

SOURCE: 1990 Vilas County Economic Indicator Report; Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics, 1991-2003.